

Australian section, 53 large eucalyptus trees were blown down. Several were unusual specimens that had not been classified by Arboretum taxonomists who were waiting for the trees to produce flowers and seeds before making positive identification. The Arboretum also lost five trees in the Biblical garden on Tallac Knoll — two cedars of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) that had withstood the storms of the previous quarter century and three gopherwood trees (*Cupressus sempervirens*) which, according to the Bible, supplied wood for construction of Noah's ark.

The rain began Feb. 13 while the Department work force and the California Conservation Corps crews were still removing debris and repairing damage caused by the winds. By the time it stopped nine days later, 17.8 inches had fallen at the Arboretum, 9.89 inches at South Coast Botanic Garden, and 16.09 inches at Descanso Gardens, making February, 1980, the wettest February since record keeping began in the area.

Descanso Gardens was forced to close its gates to the public on Feb.

19 after 1.62 to 3.01 inches of rain fell each day for six successive days. During this deluge the large elm by the Hospitality House toppled as did 11 oaks in the camellia forest.

Runoff from the 2.38 inches of rain that fell at South Coast Botanic Garden on Feb. 16 cut a ditch about 12 feet deep and 20 feet long beside the tram road along the south property line. When the water reached the stream, it deposited heavy silt and washed the five-ton bridge about 250 feet downstream. By that evening the water was running three feet deep over the outfall of the lake.

The series of seven rainstorms that dumped the heavy precipitation on southern California did not cause any major damage at the Arboretum. Although 12.34 inches of rain fell during a four-day period from Feb. 14 through Feb. 17, the Arboretum rode out the rain with only some surface erosion. The Meadowbrook stream and the waterfall were closed for 15 days, however, while crews removed silt and windborne debris deposited into the water by the storms.

4th OF JULY WESTERN AMERICA FESTIVAL

A WEEKEND OF music, dance, and alfresco dining at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum will commemorate America's 204th birthday. Starting with a picnic basket supper on July 3, "The West — America's Fantasy" will feature four days of celebration. Proceeds from the event are earmarked for the new Hall of Environmental Education now in the final planning stage.

Highlight of the festival is a premiere performance of "The Old Fashioned Picnic" by the Burch Mann American Folk Ballet on July 3. This ballet was written especially for the event. The American Folk Ballet is a totally new concept in dance theatre, the only company in the world created directly from the folklore history of America.

"I have tried to create an art form dealing with basic human emotions that all can understand to reveal real people: our laughing, crying, exuberant ancestors who hammered a nation out of a wilderness," said Burch Mann, director and choreographer.

The festival, first in the history of the Arboretum, is sponsored by the California Arboretum Foundation and organized by Richard Ray. The California Arts Council provided part of the funds for the dance festival. Details on the festival will be mailed to Foundation members.

Visitors to the Arboretum over the long weekend will also be able to enjoy the Cactus and Succulent Show held in the Lecture Hall from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., July 4, 5, and 6.

LOVELL SWISHER

WHEN Lovell Swisher died Feb. 4 at age 93, the Department lost a friend whose involvement predated the existence of the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. As the respected general manager and vice-president of the Men's Garden Club which he helped establish in 1950, Mr. Swisher was instrumental in gaining support on a governmental level for the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum during its early years as well as in recent years. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the California Arboretum Foundation for nine years and was later named an honorary trustee.

Mr. Swisher also served on the



Lovell Swisher

advisory committee for the design of the Los Angeles Civic Center Mall.

With his horticultural experiments Mr. Swisher made other contributions to Los Angeles County, including several horticultural innovations. He was the first man in Los Angeles to succeed in pollinating the bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*), the first to grow Chinese ground orchids (*Bletilla*) and the purple orchid (*Bletia*) in commercial quantities, and the second person to grow cymbidium orchids outdoors in this area.

His wife of 66 years, Lucy Cleve-



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